

How do I know what level team is best for my athlete?

Each cheerleading level is determined by the age group (mini, youth, junior, senior...) and the skill level (1,2,3,4,5...).

The age groups are according to the cheerleader's age as of August 31st of the current year.

Mini- 8 years and under

Youth- 11 years and under

Junior- 14 years and under

Senior- 18 years and under

The skill level at each age group is determined by an athlete's tumbling and stunting levels, although jump and choreography abilities are also considered.

level	Tumbling skills	Stunting skills
1	Round off, Front and back walkovers	Thigh stand, double base, one-legged stunts at thigh level
2	Back handsprings, Front handsprings, extended passes containing front walkover-round-off-multiple handsprings	Extended stunt on 2 legs One-legged stunts at torch level Straight ride basket toss
3	Back tuck Extended passes ending in backtuck for example, front walkover round-off-two backhand springs-back tuck	Extended one-legged stunts Basket tosses with 1 air position (e.g. toe touch) Twisting down from double base and full extension

Teams are judged based on skill difficulty and execution. In order to receive full marks for any skill, whether it is stunting, tumbling, jumps or dance, it must be completed by the majority of the team (more than two thirds of the team). It is also important that athletes are on a team with other athletes around the same age and maturity as their other teammates. Finally, it's important for an athlete's

confidence that they are in a skill level that is challenging, but not so far beyond their ability that they don't feel as though their skills are contributing to the team's success. When teams are selected, these three factors ultimately determine what team an athlete will be on. First and foremost, every athlete is sorted into their respective age category. Second, athletes are sorted into levels based on their overall tumbling level. If an athlete has tumbling experience, but no cheerleading experience, they will typically be placed on a lower level because they do not have the experience to be stunting at the same level that they are tumbling at (which can be a safety concern). Finally, some athletes are moved up an age division or level to fill in stunting positions to create full, strong stunt groups.

From a coaches' perspective. Team placement is critically important to the success of each cheerleader and ultimately each team. Placing a child at a level they are not ready for can be stressful to the cheerleader and undermine a cheerleader's self-confidence when performing with stronger peers. A suitable team will challenge a cheerleader with new skills and allow the cheerleader to showcase their skills in a routine. I cannot emphasize enough how important correct team level placement is to the healthy development of a cheerleader's skills and self-confidence.